

Sakhalin Ainu language

Sakhalin Ainu was an Ainu language or perhaps several Ainu languages, spoken on the island of Sakhalin, now part of Russia.

History and present situation

The Ainu of Sakhalin appear to have been a relatively recent expansion from Hokkaido, displacing the indigenous Okhotsk culture. Oral history records Ainu displacement of an indigenous people they called the *Tonchi* who, based on toponymic evidence, were Nivkh.^[3]

After World War II, when Sakhalin came under Soviet control, all but 100 of the Ainu living in Sakhalin were deported to Japan. The last Ainu household on the island died out in the 1960s.^[4] The language survived longer in Japan, going extinct in 1994 with the death of Take Asai.^[1]

Dialects

Sakhalin Ainu may have been more than a single language. Information about linguistic diversity throughout Sakhalin island and among Sakhalin Ainu dialects is scant. At present, two can be said to be the best documented dialects - the dialect from the settlement of Rayciska (Japanese: 来知志 - ライチシ), on the western coast of Sakhalin on the Strait of Tartary near modern Ulegorsk and the dialect from Tarayka (Japanese: 多来加 - タライカ), facing what is today the Gulf of Patience near modern Poronaysk on the eastern coast. Linguistic material on both dialects comes in the shape of transcriptions,^[5] recordings (http://www.aa.tufts.ac.jp/~mmine/kiki_gen/murasaki/asai01.html) and transliterations^{[6][7]} of narratives and conversations. These were elicited from Ainu native speakers who lived either on Sakhalin or in Hokkaido, after they had been deported from Russia to Japan. A number of narratives from the south-eastern coast of Sakhalin were also elicited by Pilsudski^[8] from native speakers living in the Ainu settlements of Ay, Hunup, Takoye, Sieraroko, Ochohpoka, Otasan down to Tunayci, nearby today's Tunay Lake (Russian: Озеро Тунайча). These dialects appear to be strikingly similar to the Tarayka dialect. Nevertheless, the eastern coastal variety of Tarayka is reported to be divergent from other southern varieties. Scanty data from Western voyages at the turn of the 19th–20th century suggest there was also great diversity further north.^[9]

The Sakhalin Ainu dialects had a final -h phoneme (which was pronounced as /x/) and they also had long vowels.

References

1.

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2.

Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Sakhalin Ainu" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/sakh1245>). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.

Sakhalin Ainu	
Native to	Japan
Region	Sakhalin, later Hokkaido
Ethnicity	Sakhalin Ainu
Extinct	1994, with the death of Take Asai ^[1]
Language family	Ainu <div>▪ Sakhalin Ainu</div>
Dialects	Taraika
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	<i>None</i> (mis)
Glottolog	sakh1245 (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/sakh1245) ^[2]

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 5. Pilsudski, Bronislaw (1912). *Materials for the Study of the Ainu Language and Folklore*. Cracow: the Imperial Academy of Sciences "Spółka Wydawnicza Polska".
 6. Murasaki, Kyōko (1976). *カラフトアイヌ語 - テキスト篇*. Tokyo: Kokusho Keikōkai.
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